

Charters have never shied away from the challenge of educating special needs or ELL students, and the study showed that these students exhibited the largest gains in MCAS scores once they enrolled in charters.

Researchers also examined student retention rates and found no difference between Boston charters and Boston district schools. In fact, charters retain a significantly larger percentage of their students at the middle school level, according to the study.

It is unfortunate that in the face of irrefutable evidence from multiple independent sources, charter opponents continue to cherry pick statistics and misrepresent facts to protect the status quo and block parents from seeking high quality educational opportunities for their children.

Charters have proven effective at educating disadvantaged children and providing them with a road to college and opportunities to succeed in life. They have also positively influenced debate and action on education reform. Stifling the innovation charters encourage and the opportunities they provide is a misguided, intolerable policy.

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(NOTE: The study, Charter School Demand and Effectiveness, A Boston Update (tbf.org/reports) was conducted by the School Effectiveness and Inequality Initiative at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) and was funded by The Boston Foundation and NewSchools Venture Fund.)

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**NEW MIT STUDY SHOWS BOSTON CHARTERS PRODUCING SIGNIFICANT
ACADEMIC GAINS AMONG HIGH NEEDS CHILDREN; REFUTES OPPONENTS'
CLAIMS ABOUT CHARTER ENROLLMENT**

(Statement By Marc Kenen, Executive Director, MCPSA)

BOSTON, OCTOBER 24, 2013 – The M.I.T. study is the latest in a series of independent evaluations showing that charter public schools are significantly outperforming traditional district schools in Boston. Instead of embracing charter schools and nurturing their expansion, the state has imposed arbitrary caps that limit their growth. Legislation to eliminate these caps should move swiftly out of the Education Committee and through the Legislature to allow charters to continue to expand in Boston and other underperforming districts where charters are now frozen.

Attending a Boston charter school is a child's best route to college and a bright future. The study showed that attending Boston charters results in dramatic academic gains of 6-12 percentage points per year on MCAS. Over time, this results in the elimination of the achievement gap between low-income urban students and affluent suburban students.

This level of academic performance has led to increasing demand for charter seats. Between 2009 and 2013, the percentage of Boston 6th graders entering charter lotteries rose from 15% to 33%, while the percentage of 9th graders entering lotteries rose from 11% to 15%, according to the report.

The study undercuts opponents' claims that differences in academic performance can be explained away by demographic variations in enrollment.

Boston charter demographics mirror the district's among low-income and minority students and differ only slightly with respect to special needs children, according to the study. Among English Language Learners, a gap still exists but is getting smaller as charters continue to increase the number of ELL students they enroll. MCPSA's own survey of Boston charter schools shows that this year 19% of new students enrolled are classified as ELL.